



9 Ways to Engage Your RCM Team

An engaged workforce is often a happy, productive one. But the healthcare industry as a whole is facing significant challenges. When revenue cycle teams are experiencing lackluster engagement and rampant turnover, something has to be done.





Why Healthcare Leaders Need to Care About Staff Engagement

Team retention is crucial for virtually every industry, particularly healthcare operations. Those with experience in revenue cycle know just how complex workflows get and how much learning happens directly on the job.

This makes it painful anytime someone leaves, as their knowledge of EHRs and payer processes walks right out the door with them.

A loss of experienced employees can result in extensive training time for new hires and costly mistakes. Even a simple patient registration error made by an inexperienced staff member can lead to a chain of edits that cost your organization both time and money.

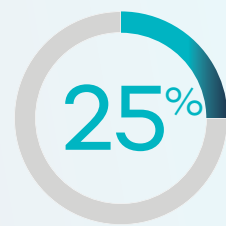
Training and mistakes aside, it's also expensive to replace experienced employees.



60% OF HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS HAVE 100+ OPEN ROLES

\$6K

COST OF REPLACING A SENIOR-LEVEL REVENUE CYCLE ROLE



25% OF HEALTHCARE FINANCE LEADERS NEED TO HIRE 20+ REVENUE CYCLE STAFF

Source: AKASA

Yet, despite the crucial importance of staff retention, employee engagement across the board is a meager 36%.

That means it's likely that 64% of your team (or more!) is disengaged. Disengaged workers aren't invested in what they're doing, and likely do the bare minimum when it comes to work queues. Disengagement also makes it easier to leave a job. After all, why stick with a job you don't believe in?



Healthcare operations is very mission-driven, like other aspects of healthcare. But, you often hear members of revenue cycle say, 'I'm not a clinician, but...' While RCM may not be clinical work, it's vital to healthcare as a whole. It's important to drive engagement within your workforce and remind your team that their work is mission-critical, and ultimately tied to the success of the healthcare organization and the health of the patients."



AMY RAYMOND
VP of Revenue Cycle Operations
at AKASA



Fortunately, there's hope for organizations looking to drive engagement in the revenue cycle and create an environment that thrives. First, it's essential to fully understand the role engagement plays.

It takes time and effort to build a talented revenue cycle team. And it takes even more time to build a team that knows your organization. Many of your systems and workflows are likely unique, your denials processes are nuanced, and fringe cases require firsthand experience to fully understand.

Members of your team might know how to do their job very well, but, if neglected, they can become disengaged and eventually leave. Disengaged workers are less productive and prone to leaving, costing companies roughly \$550 billion annually.

Not only does employee churn cost you financially, you also lose all the unique knowledge your employee gained while working for you and for previous organizations. A new hire might have healthcare operations experience, but they won't know how to work in your EHR and various workflows as well as the disengaged, seasoned employee that left.

With healthcare being one of the hardest hit industries during the Great Resignation, you can't afford disengagement. The cost of ignoring engagement can be catastrophic to your team and your metrics.

On the other hand, an engaged team is often a productive, happy team.

In fact, engaged employees are often more productive and profitable and more likely to stay with your team. This allows you and your staff to focus on delivering the best patient experience — rather than constantly training replacement hires on how to work within your systems.

In short: An investment in engagement is an investment in a happier, more productive, more sustainable RCM team.



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How to Improve RCM Staff Engagement

Hiring great talent is only the first part of building a successful healthcare operations team. Now, it's time to take the necessary steps to drive engagement in your team.

Here's some actionable advice for improving engagement in your organization.

01: Ground performance expectations in reality

Even the most experienced employees need realistic performance expectations. Expectations act as a guiding light for your team, giving them something all training and efforts should build toward. Yet, [half of employees](#) are unsure of their employer's expectations.

The revenue cycle moves quickly, leaving little room for error. While training provides a solid foundation for many new hires, much of RCM knowledge comes from actual on-the-job experience. This means your new hires will sometimes drop the ball, and likely work through queues slower than someone with years of experience.

Realistic expectations give new hires achievable goals and prevent demotivation through failure to hit unrealistic metrics.

Similarly, realistic expectations also give your seasoned employees a solid baseline of what constitutes "good" vs. "great" performance. If you're stating claim edits should take four minutes when they really take seven, you're setting your entire team up for failure.

However, realistic expectations require accurate benchmarks, and those aren't easy to come by in the revenue cycle. This is why **AKASA created the Worklogger™ tool**, our proprietary screen recording and logging software that remotely observes how clients' teams complete tasks. The end result is visibility into staff processes, rapidly understanding workflows, and providing the foundational data to power AKASA's automation.



Claim your productivity benchmark report, featuring accurate time-per-task data based on real-world data pulled with the Worklogger tool, to set realistic expectations for your team today.



02 Build a remote-friendly workplace

Revenue cycle operations is historically an in-office function. Despite this, 39% of workers are willing to leave their job for one that allows remote work. On top of this, healthcare operations is now competing with the likes of Amazon, fast food, and retail when it comes to pay — a competition often lost.

Unlike those competitors, however, revenue cycle management is in a position to offer largely-remote roles, which is an excellent draw for employees prioritizing flexibility. This is especially true for functions like coding, which are easily done from home using HIPAA-compliant software and communication tools. (And by no coincidence, [coding is the most frequent job](#) to go remote in healthcare operations.)

Simply put: You need to create a remote workplace. If the prospect of people leaving for a remote job isn't enough motivation, remote workplaces bring other benefits:

01 BUILDS TRUST:

A remote workspace shows you trust your team while allowing them to work more comfortably from any location. Nobody likes being micromanaged, and nothing shows confidence like allowing your team to work comfortably from home, without maximum oversight.

02 EXPANDS HIRING POOL:

With engagement low and churn high, you need the largest talent pool possible. By opening yourself up to remote work, you're creating a nationwide talent pool that allows you to find as many qualified people as possible, and compete with physical competitors offering higher wages. This is especially beneficial if you're operating out of a more rural location with limited candidates available.

To make a remote environment a reality, [get the right tools](#) in place to support a remote team. Loop in your most tenured revenue cycle specialists, as well. This is a great chance for them to train new hires, support those who need it, and help you focus more on building a strong foundation for a remote team.

Also, if you have reservations about building a remote revenue cycle team, [here's some expert advice to help](#).

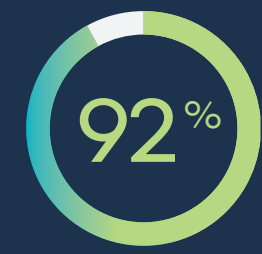


03 Create ongoing training that supports your team

Quality training can make or break any employment experience, especially in the complex world of revenue cycle management. Even the simplest of mistakes in patient access can lead to issues that persist all the way to billing.

When you deliver quality training, you're not only setting your team up for success, you're also showing them you care.

You're also improving engagement.



92% OF EMPLOYEES REPORTED A POSITIVE IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT ON ACCOUNT OF TRAINING

Source: [AXONIFY](#)

Begin your training overhaul by digitizing as much of your training as possible to support a remote workspace and make it easier to update outdated materials. (It's a lot easier to update a digital learning piece than run dozens of new-printed handbooks.) Digital training is also suited for self-led training, which two-out-of-three employees prefer.

Create an internal wiki that your team can add to as they find new or better ways to do something. This knowledge base allows new hires to pull knowledge quickly from tenured employees, and prevents institutional knowledge from walking out the door when someone leaves.

With much of the learning process coming from first-hand experience in the revenue cycle, this gives your new hires a chance to create material based on their experiences and help future hires have a smoother onboarding.

04 Cross-train your team

Many organizations assign tasks to staff by payer. While this may make sense at first, it limits your team's ability to cover one another in the event of vacation, sick days, or employees leaving. It also keeps people from learning other areas and makes it far more likely people will burn out in their limited roles. This is where cross-training comes in.

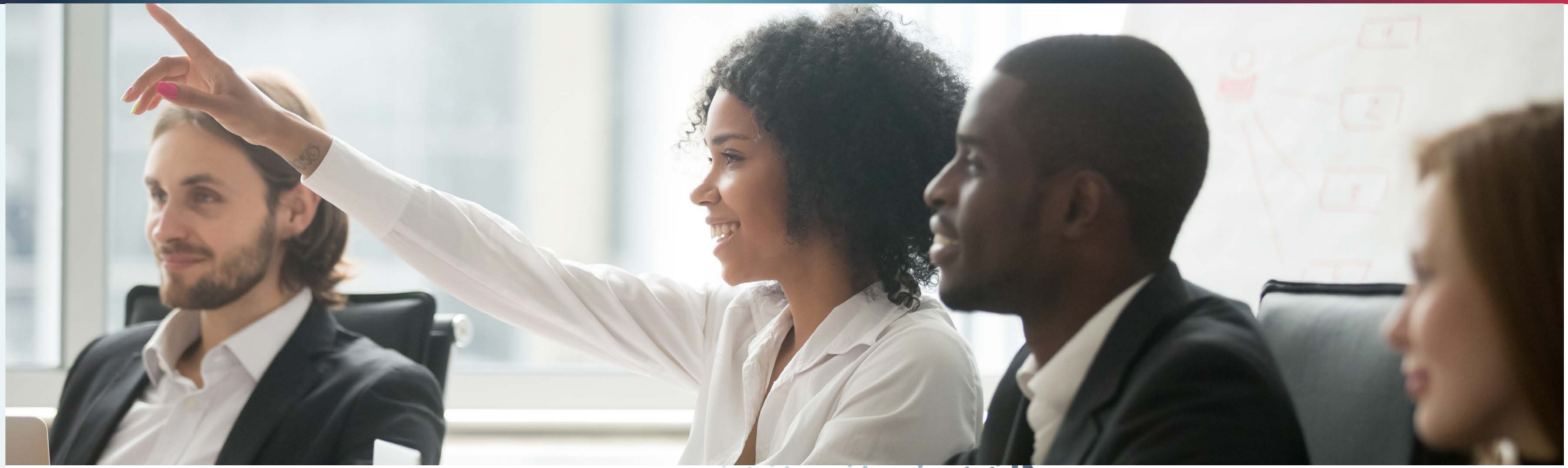
Rotate your teams, with each person handling a different work queue every week. This gives everyone an opportunity to learn unique payers and processes, allowing for natural skill-building. This also creates a more engaging environment, as people aren't doing the same things week after week. And in the event of employee churn or time off, you have a team capable of covering their work.



There's a common issue in the revenue cycle of 'passing the buck.' A registration issue arises and someone thinks, 'This is a registration issue, I'll hand it to patient access.' Some systems are set up in a way where people have to pass things, and it's inefficient. In other cases, passing the buck is indicative of poor engagement and a need for training. Cross-training can prevent this passing around, and help people feel engaged and empowered.

AMY RAYMOND

VP of Revenue Cycle Operations at AKASA



05 Help your team work at the top of their skill set

It's unlikely people on your team want to stay in their current position forever. [Ochsner Healthcare System](#) conducted an internal survey and found most of its revenue cycle specialists wanted non-patient-facing roles with opportunities for upward mobility.

Most people want to learn new skills — those actively engaged in learning are [23% more likely](#) to take on more tasks and responsibilities.

By giving your team the opportunity to learn new skills — like moving from claim status to denials — and work at the top of their skill set, you're helping your people build a better future for themselves and building a stronger foundation for your department. You're also increasing the chances your people stay.

Remember the survey mentioned before? Most revenue cycle specialists want upward mobility.

Leverage your new digital learning hubs and offer frequent self-led learning opportunities for your team, keeping them in the loop regarding new requirements and processes, teaching them about the latest tools or techniques and beyond.

Everyone learns differently — some preferring to read, others to listen, others to visualize, and some a mixture. Create as many training types as possible to ensure you're hitting every learning style. Create online courses that incorporate animation, audio, and interactive elements.

06 Provide a clear growth path

As you give your team opportunities to work at the top of their skill set and learn, it's important they also have a clear growth path.

Remember: Some employees want to move up and change positions. Showing these employees that all their hard work, training, and learning results in tangible growth will go a long way to keeping your team engaged.

Map out goals and training for employees wanting to move from one level to the next. When they accomplish those goals, make the promotion or role change a reality. This encourages others to show up every day, and lets your team know their time and efforts are appreciated.

“Some people have been in the same seat in the revenue cycle for 30 years, and that's perfect for them. Others want to move up. Providing a clear growth path and rewarding those who excel with promotions along that path signals to your team that their efforts are noticed. And, this builds trust, which goes a long way toward engagement.”

AMY RAYMOND
VP of Revenue Cycle Operations at AKASA



47% OF EMPLOYEES ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB THAT OFFERS CAREER GROWTH

Source: [LATTICE](#)

Level-up Your Team

- ✔ Create self-led trainings on new requirements and processes
- ✔ Use multiple mediums: reading, listening, interactivity
- ✔ Take advantage of online course builders
- ✔ Promote trainings in intranet or via email
- ✔ Collect training feedback from your team

07 Provide incremental recognition

It's easy to focus on growth and exceeding expectations, which are both areas to celebrate and recognize. But revenue cycle operations is fast-paced and high-stress as it is. The last thing you want is a team that feels they have to over-deliver all the time. This kind of environment will only burn your team out faster and lead to disengagement.

As your team learns and grows, and even as they do what's expected in their current position or embodies a company value, give them recognition. Whether someone's new or a seasoned healthcare ops veteran, praise their hard work and dedication to delivering clean claims or a great patient experience.

For those learning a new skill, recognize the growth and encourage them through any mistakes. Did someone hit a new personal milestone for denials worked? Receive nice feedback from a patient with a complex bill? Celebrate it!

Lastly, praise those who embody company values. At the end of the day, healthcare operations exists to keep health systems functioning and deliver the best patient experience possible — two missions worth remembering at all times.



“Much of an employee's satisfaction comes from how well they think they're doing, not just how well they're actually doing. Oftentimes, after I give my team a shoutout during an all-hands call, I get numerous individual messages thanking me for knowing how hard they're all working. As a revenue cycle leader, it's so easy to overlook that your team might not even be aware you know how hard they're working. Acknowledgment of that hard work, and reminders of the importance of their efforts on a team and individual level, go a long way.”

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Celebrate victories big and small

- ✔ Recognize when someone completes a new training
- ✔ Celebrate when a certain number of claims are cleared
- ✔ Praise those who exhibit departmental or company values
- ✔ Recognize if someone simply helped another teammate

08 Create an environment of trust and transparency

It's one thing to talk about openness in the workplace. In reality, you need to build a workplace of trust and transparency, where your team is in the loop and knows what to expect.

Trust your team to do their jobs. If someone's doing great work, give them more flexibility and freedom to work without as much oversight. This gives them freedom and confidence in their abilities, and also gives you more time to help those actually in need of help.

As part of building trust, give your revenue cycle team ownership if something goes wrong. Oftentimes when issues are found, they're routed to the appropriate department (including management). Management then looks into the issue even further in hopes of resolving the issue and putting in a permanent fix. Giving the revenue cycle rep the opportunity to resolve this matter successfully empowers that individual. That helps build trust while simultaneously helping your team learn new skills along the way.

Allow your top-performers to explore areas of interest and grow, rather than keep them stagnant. Your top performers have clearly mastered the basics. Now let them thrive in other areas. Give others help if needed and reward them with that same flexibility and trust that top-performers enjoy.



09 Support your RCM team with automation

Time is precious, especially when you're trying to improve training, build a transparent workplace, and essentially improve your operations as a whole. Fortunately, automation can **create capacity** and give you that time — and more.

Automation allows for the removal of grunt work and various box-checking, mundane tasks throughout the revenue cycle. **This comes with several perks and opens the door to numerous benefits for your team:**

- Automation helps improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention by re-adjusting workload and reducing burnout.
- The time saved using automation allows you to focus on training and help your team work at the top of their skill set.
- Automating the busy work frees up your team to focus on becoming patient advocates and growing their abilities, giving them the [upward mobility](#) they want.

With an automation strategy that comprehensively addresses complex and repetitive processes, people can shift their focus to more strategic and meaningful work. The right automation strategy should elevate and empower staff across the organization so people can do what they love and healthcare providers can allocate resources where they matter most.

AKASA can help you achieve this.

VISIT [AKASA.COM](#)



Driving Engagement With AKASA

AKASA delivers comprehensive automation for complex workflows. Our technology is purpose-built for revenue cycle. Using AI, ML, and our RCM experts, we offer seamlessly integrated products that provide efficiency, accuracy, and resiliency. With AKASA, you can improve revenue outcomes, achieve greater efficiency, and elevate your people.

And build the revenue cycle of the future.



In the revenue cycle, we often hear and say, 'I'm not a doctor, but...' We may not work with patients in the same way as doctors, physicians, and specialists, but we're all working toward the common goal of caring for our community. Engagement is crucial to meeting this goal, and hitting any organizational or departmental targets as well. Take your mission statement and value pillars and translate that to the work your team is doing, and you'll have a team that understands why they're showing up every day — THAT is engagement.



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more about AKASA
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